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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the inclusion of minorities in Basic Course Programs, undergraduate degree programs, and graduate degree programs in the field of Communication. A survey was completed by representatives from 27 institutions in 16 states, including private and public institutions, rural and urban, commuter and residential. Specifically, the survey addressed the issues of minority enrollments, the distribution of minorities among the faculty, the efforts of each program to recruit and retain minority undergraduate and graduate students, and hiring, recruitment, and mentoring practices for minority faculty. Results revealed that minority students are not in the "pipeline" in sufficient numbers to have any noteworthy impact on the availability of minority faculty in the coming years. Data also indicated that there has been a decline in the proportion of minority students in Communication since 1978-80, making the potential supply appear even more meager in the face of growing demand. Findings suggest that colleges and universities are losing ground concerning affirmative action. (KEH)

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Who's Out There...And Why Not?

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The 28th annual meeting of the Midwest Basic Course Directors' Conference was held in Wichita, Kansas, on February 9-11, 1989. Representatives from 27 institutions in 16 states attended the meeting, where they completed the survey which provided the data on which these comments are based. The campuses represented at the meeting included private and public institutions, rural and urban, commuter and residential. The geographic representation outlined an area from Virginia to Mississippi to Texas to South Dakota to Wisconsin to Ohio.

The first section of the survey ***(ENROLLMENT)*** was specific to the issues of minority enrollments in the Basic Course Program, the Undergraduate Degree Programs, and the Graduate Programs of the campuses represented. *Minority* was defined operationally to include Blacks, Hispanics, and Native American Indians. The second section of the survey ***(TEACHING)*** provided data concerning the distribution of minorities among the faculty (GTA's, Adjunct, and Full-time) involved in the Basic Course Programs of these campuses. Distribution by gender within each category was collected in all cases.

The third feature of the survey ***(RECRUITING)*** asked for information about the programs and efforts of each campus to recruit minority undergraduate and graduate students, and the campus and departmental efforts to retain those students. The final feature of the survey ***(HIRING/MENTORING)*** included a series of questions designed to identify respondents' familiarity with hiring, recruitment and mentoring practices for minority faculty at their respective institutions.

ENROLLMENT

For the 27 institutions whose representatives completed the survey:

48,860 students were enrolled in Basic Course Programs for 1988-89
...23,475 were male (48.05%)
...25,385 were female (51.95%)

4,745 were minority students (Black, Hispanic, or Native American Indian)
...2,293 were male (9.77% of all males; 4.69% of all students in the Basic Course)
...2,452 were female (9.66% of all females; 5.02% of all students in the Basic Course)
3,187 were Black (6.52% of all students in the Basic Course)
...1,540 were male (6.56 % of all males; 3.15% of all students in the Basic Course)
...1,647 were female (6.49% of all females; 3.37% of all students in the Basic Course)
1,312 were Hispanic (2.69% of all students in the Basic Course)
...625 were male (2.66% of all males; 1.28% of all students in the Basic course)
...687 were female (2.71% of all females; 1.41% of all students in the Basic Course)
246 were Native American Indian (0.50% of all students in the Basic Course)
...128 were male (0.55% of all males; 0.26% of all students in the Basic Course)
...118 were female (0.47% of all females; 0.24% of all students in the Basic Course)

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Thus, the male population in the Basic Course Program for these 27 campuses was:

6.56% Black
2.66% Hispanic
0.55% Native American Indian
90.23% majority

The female population in the Basic Course Program for these 27 campuses was:

6.49% Black
2.71% Hispanic
0.47% Native American Indian
90.34% majority

The average number of students completing the Basic Course Program annually at these 27 campuses was 1813.33. The average number of Black students completing the Basic Course Programs annually at these 27 institutions was 118.04. The average number of Hispanic students completing the Basic Course Programs annually at these 27 institutions was 48.59. The average number of Native American Indian students completing the Basic Course Programs annually at these 27 institutions was 9.11. On average, 175.74 minority students completed the Basic Course Programs annually at these 27 campuses in 1988-89.

These data are comparable to enrollment data for other freshman "core" programs and for most geographic regions of the country. Urban commuter campuses reported much higher percentages of minority enrollment in Basic Course Programs than did rural residential campuses, and public institutions reported similarly greater percentages than did private ones.

Enrollments in undergraduate degree programs are less compatible with national data, and the obtained data suggest that minority representation in undergraduate degree programs in Communication differs greatly from undergraduate programs in other disciplines. Two campuses (7.41% of the sample) reported no minority undergraduate majors, and no campuses reported greater than 21% minority undergraduate majors. The median response was 0% enrollment for minority males or females across the sample, with 0% the median for male and female Hispanics and Native American Indians, and 1-3% the median for Black males and females. Average minority enrollment in undergraduate degree programs at these 27 campuses was 7.80% for 1988-89.

As enrollments in undergraduate degree programs in Communication have risen over the past decade, representation of minority students in those programs has failed to keep pace. Based on those undergraduate students who are most likely to consider graduate work in the disciplines within Communication, the field likely will be dominated by majority males and females at severely disproportionate ratios for at least the next decade.

The outcome with regard to the population of graduate programs in Communication is equally skewed. Twenty of the 27 campuses included in the survey have graduate programs, and ten (50.00%) reported that there are no minority students in those programs. Minority students constitute only 5.37% of all enrollments in graduate programs in the sampled groups: 1.96% male and 3.41% female. Hispanic males and females, and Native American Indian males and females, consistent with their representation in undergraduate degree programs, are nearly nonexistent in Communication graduate programs. The data reveal that there are fewer than 35 minority graduate students at the campuses included in this survey; by extrapolation, there may be fewer than 140 minority graduate students in Communication in the nation.

The declining scale is obvious: slightly less than 10% of the students enrolled in Basic Course Programs are minority students; less than 8% of the undergraduate degree program students are minority students; and less than 6% of the graduate program students are minority students. Minority students may have completed Basic Course Programs in proportion to their population on a given campus, but they have not pursued degree programs in communication fields in comparable proportions.

TEACHING

So many students are required (or similarly encouraged) to complete a basic course in Communication that those who teach in Basic Course Programs assuredly have an impact on the lives and thinking of a large percentage of the freshman and sophomore students throughout the country. Who is doing that highly impactive teaching?

For the 27 institutions whose representatives completed the survey:

196 full-time members of the faculty teach in the Basic Course Program
...112 are male (57.14% of the total)
...84 are female (42.86% of the total)

6 are minority (3.06% of the total)
...5 of the minority faculty are male (83.33% of the minority faculty; 2.55% of the total full-time faculty)
...1 of the minority faculty is female (16.67% of the minority faculty; 0.51% of the total full-time faculty)
3 of the minority faculty are Black (50.00% of the minority faculty; 1.53% of the total full-time faculty)
...2 are male (66.67% of the Black full-time faculty; 1.02% of the total full-time faculty)
...1 is female (33.33% of the Black full-time faculty; 0.51% of the total full-time faculty)
2 of the minority faculty are Hispanic (33.33% of the minority faculty; 1.02% of the total full-time faculty)
...2 are male (100.00% of the Hispanic full-time faculty; 1.02% of the total full-time faculty)
1 of the minority faculty is Native American Indian (16.67 of the minority full-time faculty; 1.02% of the total full time faculty)
...1 is male (16.67% of the minority full-time faculty; 1.02% of the total full time faculty)

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA's) are nearly twice as numerous as full-time faculty in the Basic Course Programs of these 27 institutions. Five (18.52%) of the participating institutions reported that no full-time faculty teach in the Basic Course Program. Such findings scarcely surprise anyone who has been a Basic Course Director.

Of 374 GTA's teaching in the Basic Course Programs of these 27 campuses:
...167 are male (44.65%)
...207 are female (55.35%)

Of the 167 males:
...2 are Black (1.19% of male GTA's; 0.53% of all GTA's)
...3 are Hispanic (1.80% of male GTA's; 0.80% of all GTA's)

Of the 207 females
...14 are Black (6.76% of female GTA's; 3.74% of all GTA's)
...2 are Hispanic (0.97% of female GTA's; 0.53 of all GTA's)

There are no Native American Indian GTA's in the Basic Course Programs of these 27 campuses. Only 21 GTA's are minority students (5.62% of all GTA's).

Adjunct faculty (part-time, non-tenure track, non-student instructors) provide a substantial percentage of the instructional effort in basic course programs at these 27 campuses.

Of 84 adjunct faculty:

...34 are male (40.48%)

...50 are female (59.52)

Of the 34 males, there is one minority staff member; he is Black (2.94 of male Adjuncts; 1.19% of all Adjuncts).

Of the 50 females, there are no minority staff members.

Of 654 staff members who teach in the basic course programs of these 27 campuses:

28 are minority staff members (4.28% of the total staff).

...20 are Black (71.43% of all minority staff; 3.06% of total staff)

...5 are male (1.56% of all male staff; 0.77% of total staff)

...15 are female (4.40% of all female staff; 2.29% of total staff)

...7 are Hispanic (25.00% of all minority staff; 1.07% of total staff)

...5 are male (1.56% of all male staff; 0.77% of total staff)

...2 are female (0.59% of all female staff; 0.31% of total staff)

...1 is Native American Indian (3.57% of all minority staff; 0.32% of all male staff; 0.15% of total staff)

That the faculty in most disciplines in American colleges and universities has been traditionally "male and pale" is irrefutable; that the extent of "maleness" in Communication is declining (albeit slowly) has been obvious in recent years; that the extent of "paleness" in Communication remains so nearly complete as to be bleached is a substantial indictment of our shared stewardship of the discipline.

RECRUITING

The concerted efforts by many campuses in recent years to recruit minority students into undergraduate and graduate degree programs has been well-documented in both the popular press and trade journals. The demand for "qualified" minority applicants by campuses would appear to greatly exceed the supply. The survey asked respondents to describe their awareness of such efforts on their respective campuses.

Few of the respondents were able to report specific details of the related efforts on their campuses. Typical responses to the questions about recruiting racial and ethnic minorities were:

"We try, a lot."

"Some, but I am unsure what."

"There is an office for this."

"?"

"I'm not aware of any."

"Efforts just beginning."

Two campuses identified at length the efforts by their campuses to work with minority students in grades 6-12 to begin to orient them to the possibility of pursuing college degrees.

Responses to the question, "Who is responsible on your campus for such efforts?" demonstrate clearly a major problem with most such efforts. The dominant responses were

"Nobody," and "Everybody." One does not need extensive expertise in organizational dynamics to predict the success of any effort for which no one and everyone simultaneously is responsible. The second most common response to this question was, "The Administration," suggesting that The Administration has failed to initiate recruiting efforts that combine the efforts of more than just a limited segment of the campus.

When asked to describe the success of minority student recruiting efforts, the respondents to the survey were highly consistent in reporting that success has been very modest. Where some success was reported in recruiting undergraduate minority students, no respondent identified similar success at the graduate level.

Consistent throughout the responses to the question, "What efforts are made on your campus to assure the retention of minority undergraduate students?" was the theme of "Someone else is doing this." Numerous administrative offices were identified as being "in charge" of minority student recruitment, and one response suggested that the Department of Foreign Languages had primary responsibility for such efforts.

It is highly probable that most faculty members do not feel that recruitment and retention of students—minority or majority—is an issue for which they are directly responsible. That condition, which clearly existed for the respondents to this survey, indicates the extent to which administrative personnel have failed in their efforts to help faculty understand either the significance or the scope of recruitment and retention.

HIRING/MENTORING

A series of questions on the survey asked respondents to identify departmental efforts to attract minority/minority status individuals to apply for faculty positions, and related efforts to assure retention and advancement of such faculty. The responses were uniform in reporting that recruiting efforts are (1) dictated by the Affirmative Action Office, (2) largely unsuccessful, and (3) exceedingly costly in terms of advertising and time. Such responses do not suggest a wide-spread faculty commitment to other than the concept of minority faculty recruitment. Efforts are made, but unsuccessful efforts are generally accepted as inevitable. Given the paucity of minority students now in graduate programs, that perspective may be entirely, and unfortunately, realistic.

Respondents were asked to provide their own insights into the constraints or special issues confronting minorities as they consider undergraduate or graduate programs in communication. Responses included: language deficiencies; the lure of high-paying jobs upon completion of undergraduate degree programs; the lack of role models; lack of motivation; and the appeal of other (not specified) disciplines.

When asked to comment on the constraints or special issues confronting minority faculty in their quest for advancement and tenure, the comments included: no "old boy" network; social inhibitions; lack of preparation; the dominance of white, male, middle class standards in the discipline; overt racism and sexism; and--perhaps the most insightful comment in this section--"the obvious exploitation of minority faculty by those few departments/campuses who have some." No respondent identified the existence of a program--formal or informal--of mentoring minority faculty to enhance their chances for success in a world not of their making.

CONCLUSIONS

Are Basic Course Programs, undergraduate degree programs, and graduate degree programs in Communication racist? By the numbers, increasingly so; by intent, probably not. The explanation for the "numbers" is no easier to determine than it is likely to be universally accepted. Of concern, necessarily, is the probability that minority

representation in the communication faculties of the coming decades can be no better than the minority representation in the undergraduate and graduate degree programs of today. Should that probability prevail, through a period that is projected to see the increasing "minoritization" of the American population, degree programs in Communication cannot hope to maintain even today's representation of the minority college students of the next two or three decades. What will be the fate of disciplines that fail to attract sufficient numbers of all categories of students? What has been the fate of those disciplines which have failed similarly in the past twenty years?

The results of the survey suggest that there is not much of which to be proud, nor even on which to base optimism for the future, regarding recruitment and retention of minority students, or recruitment, retention, and advancement of minority faculty in Communication. Obtained data reveal that minority students are not in the "pipeline" in sufficient numbers to have any noteworthy impact on the availability of minority faculty in the coming years. Data also indicate that there has been a decline in the proportion of minority students in Communication since 1978-80, making the potential supply appear even more meagre in the face of growing demand.

Ernest L. Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, noted in a recent article in the *New York Times* that "...nearly half the teachers [surveyed for the report, *The Condition of the Professoriate: Attitudes and Trends, 1989*] expressed satisfaction with the pace of affirmative action and 21 percent more had no opinion." Dr. Boyer concluded that, "It means this [affirmative action] hasn't really been a central priority of the faculty, since all the evidence indicates that in terms of having minority faculty, colleges and universities aren't just standing still—they're losing ground. Yet this clearly isn't seen by most faculty as an urgent matter."

Nothing gleaned from the survey can be used to refute Dr. Boyer's conclusion.

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